

in the month of August; and Dr. Johnston subsequently met with other specimens of the same plant later in the season, as he recorded in the minutes of the Proceedings of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club.

It is perhaps worth notice, that the *Kallymenia reniformis* found in this neighbourhood has uniformly the small, round-leaved, shrubby character of the figure of it in Sowerby's 'English Botany.' The fruit is also large for the size of the plant.

If these trifling notices can be made available for the information of any of your readers, I shall be very glad.

Yours, &c.,

MARGARET GATTY.

ON THE SUPPOSED NEW BRITISH SPECIES OF SKENEA.

To the Editors of the *Annals of Natural History*.

Upton Hall, Birkenhead, Feb. 9, 1857.

GENTLEMEN,—I am indebted to the kindness of J. Gwyn Jeffreys, Esq., for permission to send to your Journal the following extract from a letter, the result of an examination kindly undertaken by him of the small *Skenea* found by me at Falmouth,—which I at first considered a new species (a short account of which appeared in your Journal a few months since),—and a careful comparison of it with a specimen taken by himself in the Mediterranean, and also a series of the ordinary form of *Skenea rota*, taken in a living state by me at the Land's End and other parts of Cornwall:—

“The result of a careful comparison of these specimens induces me to retain the opinion I at first formed, that your *Skenea tricarinata* is only a variety of *Skenea rota*. Your species appears to differ from *S. rota* in its somewhat smaller size, in the whorls being flatter and more angular (the latter character being probably attributable to the greater prominence and distinctness of the ridges), and in the transverse ribs being less marked and not so nodulose as in the typical form. My specimens from the Mediterranean belong to this variety. All the specimens have three spiral ridges, one of them encircling the periphery and forming an obtuse keel, another on the upper side, and a third on the lower side in the centre of each whorl. The ridges are nearly equidistant from each other, and their direction is marked by a fulvous band: this character has not, I believe, been noticed by any one except yourself. I, however, give this opinion with some reservation, as I should have preferred to have an opportunity of comparing your specimens with others which I have myself collected from various parts of the British and Irish coasts; this unfortunately I cannot do at present, while I am divorced from my cabinets.”

I remain, Gentlemen, your obedient Servant,

W. WEBSTER.

*On the Influence of Moisture upon the Direction of Roots.*

By P. DUCHARTRE.

The author, after referring to the experiments of Johnson and Knight, in which seeds placed beneath a mass of moist earth, or under a damp sponge hung up in the air, directed their radicle either horizontally, so as to be applied against the moist body, or even vertically from below upwards, and indicating that the experiments of Duhamel, Dutrochet, &c., the results of which were unfavourable to the idea that moisture has any influence upon the direction of roots, were made in such a way that they do not authorize any conclusion to be drawn from them, proceeds to describe some observations of his own on this subject. These observations were made upon two plants of a *Hortensia* and a shrubby *Veronica* (*V. Lindleyana*), the pots containing which had been placed in a hermetically closed apparatus. Under the influence of a confined atmosphere, saturated with humidity, these plants first of all developed, upon the lower part of their stems, roots several centimeters in length, which extended themselves in the moist air, some horizontally, others in a more or less ascending direction. Numerous roots issued from the moderately moist earth in the pots of the two last-mentioned plants, and rose into the moist air, sometimes obliquely, sometimes directly upwards.—*Comptes Rendus*, 5 January 1857, p. 10.

*On the Migration of the Starling.* By JAMES HARLEY, Esq., of Leicester.

*To the Editors of the Annals of Natural History.*

GENTLEMEN,—I am more than half inclined to believe that the observations made by Col. George Montagu on the migratory habits of that pretty bird, the Starling, are correct, although none of our own more recent out-door naturalists have ventured, in their writings, when engaged on its monograph, to advert to that part of its history. Col. Montagu is the only writer, at least with whose descriptions of its habits I am acquainted, that has made mention of the annual migration of this species.

Towards the close of the summer of last year, the writer, accompanied by a near relative, crossed from Folkestone to Boulogne, quitting Folkestone at 4 P.M. The evening was serene, with a smooth sea, and an unruffled Channel. On our losing sight of the English coast, and reaching the midway of the Straits, while engaged in our remarks on the peculiarities of the different passengers who were strolling about the deck of the vessel, a large flock of Starlings crossed our pathway overhead; we observed them at an altitude of thirty or forty yards. The flock appeared to us to consist of many hundred birds, each little creature pursuing its course in a direct line towards the Kentish coast.

After a lapse of several seconds, another flock appeared in view, fled past us, and, in a hurried manner, and by the same aerial route, made the same course towards the land of the free.

Before night-fall, and as we drew near to the coast of France, a